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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Releases Findings from UNC-CH Quality Study

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 26, 2010) – Nationally renowned researchers from the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recently concluded their statewide study to assess the quality of early care and education being provided to young children throughout Georgia. The *Georgia Study of Early Care and Education* was commissioned by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. The study, using a representative sample of child care centers and Georgia's Pre-K Programs, found scientific evidence that validates the agency's current initiatives designed to improve quality in all early learning environments.

Key findings from this study suggest (1) administrators and teachers in licensed child care centers are working hard to serve young children and their families; (2) on average, center-based care across Georgia was of "low" to "medium" quality; and (3) the quality of care for infants and toddlers was lower than the quality of care for preschoolers and Georgia's Pre-K classrooms.

"Bright from the Start initiated this independent study to give us a reliable and realistic snapshot of what quality care looks like throughout the state," Bright from the Start Commissioner Holly Robinson stated. "Some of the findings point to areas where we have already made substantial investments to improve quality. Through stimulus funding, new projects tied directly to our core mission of delivering exemplary early learning care and education are in place."

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The FPG study was conducted independent of Bright from the Start. No staff members were involved in the data collection process. All participants were assured of confidentiality in this study. Study findings are contained in two separate reports: *Child Care Center Findings* and *Findings from Georgia's Pre-K Program*. Entire copies of the reports and the executive summaries can be found at www.decal.ga.gov.

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Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.